



## **NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release: Aug. 29, 2012

Contact: Robin McCormick | [rmccormick@hampton.gov](mailto:rmccormick@hampton.gov) | 757-728-3276

22 Lincoln Street | Hampton, VA 23669

# **Some Paula Maria units condemned; residents return to apartments deemed safe**

City of Hampton officials have inspected the Paula Maria apartments, which saw flooding on Saturday and again on Tuesday evening. Some units have been condemned, but residents are being allowed to return to the units inspectors found were safe.

A total of 39 apartment units at Paula Maria have been condemned after the two bouts of flooding, as well as the complex's office. Four units had been condemned after Saturday's flood, said codes inspectors. Those were units in the back, closest to Newmarket Creek. But in Tuesday's heavy rains, with the creek still at high levels from previous rains, the flooding reached apartments that hadn't previously flooded, residents told city inspectors.

In addition, 8 first-floor apartments at nearby Century Plaza on Lassiter Drive were also condemned.

Based on the waterline and debris markings at Paula Maria, inspectors said some of the units had up to 10 inches of floodwaters.

All second-floor apartments are safe, said codes inspectors, as are some units that had less than an inch of flooding.

About 40 residents of the complex were evacuated from flooded units Tuesday evening by the Hampton Fire Department. Apartment managers found overnight lodging for those residents.

A second wave of evacuations occurred later, when Dominion Power decided to shut off power based on safety concerns. Many of the residents of the complex are elderly or have medical needs, so the city opened an emergency shelter at Eaton Middle School on Cunningham Drive.

Twenty-seven people spent Tuesday night at the shelter, staffed by the city's Human Services Department, with the Red Cross providing some resources, such as cots and food.

Several of those who stayed at the shelter thanked city staff for their support. “Everyone has been really nice to us – the rescue workers, social workers here at the shelter, Red Cross, Health Department nurses, they have all been so nice,” said Consuello LaCott, who moved to the complex in June.

She described the evacuation as: “riding in a boat down the street with the fire department, coming to the shelter – this was an adventure.”

A few left the shelter with family or friends Wednesday morning, but others were awaiting clearance to return to their apartments. Shelter workers planned to arrange transportation back to the complex this afternoon. Power was restored overnight.

By Wednesday morning, Hampton police reported that waters had receded from all the streets that had been flooded.